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ABSTRACT

This paper illustrates the functional similarities between the English and German past perfect tense which are extremely difficult for native Japanese-speaking learners of the two languages. By the time that Japanese university students begin study of the German language, most have had at least 6 years of English language study. Yet, German is taught as a completely new language, unrelated to their already acquired English-language abilities. It is suggested that this approach is counterintuitive and that German teachers should capitalize on the Japanese students' English-language abilities, both to teach German as well as to reinforce existing knowledge of English language structure. Analysis of the similarity between the English and the German tense was assessed from approximately 70 pages of German short stories; 75 occurrences of the German past perfect were identified and analyzed with the equivalent English past perfect. It was noted that tenses in English and German display equivalent semantic properties and discourse-level functions. Findings evidence the usefulness of English abilities for Japanese-speaking, German language learners and of German text analysis as a primary learning tool. (Contains 28 references.) (NAV)

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The Past Perfect Tense in English and German: Using one to teach the other

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May 21, 1995

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The Past Perfect Tense in English and German: Using one to teach the other

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Key Words and Phrases:

English, German, past perfect tense, text analysis, contrastive analysis, teaching methodology

Abstract:

By the time they reach the university, Japanese students have studied English for at least six years. Students who continue their foreign language (FL) studies in German are presented with a language which is closely related to English. However, little is done in most university German classrooms to draw connections between the grammatical structures of the two languages. German is instead usually explained in Japanese, an unrelated language. As prior linguistic knowledge is a strength of adult FL learners, this approach seems counter-intuitive in that it fails to exploit the GFL students' knowledge of English. Still, it is not enough to simply say that structure X in language A is the same as structure Y in language B, especially when neither structure has been adequately explained in terms of discourse function or meaning. This paper illustrates the functional similarities between the English and German past perfect tense, both of which are notoriously difficult for Japanese EFL/GFL students to master. Ideally, GFL instructors will then be able to utilize this analysis in explaining the German structure as well as in reinforcing the Japanese GFL learners' existing knowledge of the English structure.

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1. Introduction

By the time Japanese students begin studying German as a foreign language (GFL) (usually in the university), they have studied English in high school for at least 6 years. Although English and German are closely-related languages, a small random sampling of university GFL texts for Japanese students yielded no examples of the German past perfect tense explained in relation to the English past perfect tense (Gräwe, et al. 1993; Troll & Komatsu 1993; Sekiguchi 1993; Fukuda 1987; Oshio 1985). All explanations of this difficult German structure were given exclusively in Japanese, a language lacking an equivalent tense. The goal of the present research is to demonstrate how certain German grammatical structures could be presented and explained in a way which exploits learners' prior linguistic knowledge of English. Such an approach, it will be argued, will 1) allow learners to use their previous experience with English to better understand German, and 2) use text analysis to raise learners' metalinguistic awareness of both German and English and common structural and functional features of Germanic languages in general.

To accomplish this goal, it will first be demonstrated that the past perfect tenses of English and German are 1) similar in their discourse functions in the context of narrative prose, and 2) not explained or described adequately for learners of either English as a foreign language (EFL) or for GFL learners, respectively. In the approximately 70 pages of German short stories read for this study, 75 occurrences of the German past perfect were identified and analyzed in

comparison with the English past perfect as described primarily by Riddle (1987). It was found that the tenses in the two languages do indeed display equivalent semantic properties and discourse-level functions, and thus present an excellent opportunity for GFL learners to draw upon their knowledge of English as a learning strategy.

2. Text analysis and language proximity

"A thousand explanations will not do [for the learner] what one single text can." This statement by Olshtain (1993) encapsulates the philosophy behind using authentic texts to teach grammar and pragmatics to foreign language learners (FLL). Likewise, Kumaravadivelu promotes text analysis as a "way to activate the intuitive heuristics of the learner" (1994, p. 36) and cites both Rivers and Shaffer in asserting that the structural, lexical and sociocultural meanings of any construction can be indirectly conveyed by real texts in which the given structure is used in varying contexts. Such analysis promotes the self-discovery of rules and underlying structural patterns as well as raises the grammatical consciousness of the learner (Rutherford & Smith, 1988). Text analysis removes the middle-man, so to speak. Learners are asked to hypothesize their own rules based on their own observations and analyses of foreign language (FL) texts and then to test those hypotheses by analyzing yet more text.

To further empower learners, they should be encouraged to employ all prior linguistic experience, both with their native language and with other foreign languages, in the rule-hypothesizing process. This is especially true of adult

learners such as university students. Since adults have lost the child's (still) inexplicable ability to acquire foreign languages without the benefit of formal operational thought or analysis (cf. Brown 1987), it is crucial for adult FL learners to utilize their full range of life and linguistic experience in the FL learning process. And when the learner's second FL and third FL are closely-related (as are English and German), this learning strategy can be very fruitful.

Knowledge of a related FL (or having a related native language) will in some ways facilitate the learning of a second FL when both languages display certain common characteristics (cf. Brown 1987). Thus the foreign language program at the U.S. Foreign Service Institute is structured to allow more hours of classroom study for native English speakers studying Arabic or Japanese than for those studying Dutch or Spanish (Omaggio 1986, p. 21). If a Japanese EFL learner is already familiar with (but has not necessarily mastered) the past perfect tense of English, that learner will not be as surprised when he encounters the past perfect in German as might a Japanese GFL learner with no previous exposure to English.[1]

3. The English past perfect tense

Riddle (1987) demonstrates that most EFL/ESL textbooks do not adequately describe the semantic or discourse-level properties of the English past perfect tense. Most texts, Riddle states, rely solely on the simplistic explanation that the past perfect is used to describe a past event which occurred before another past event (cf. Azar 1989; Holschuh

1991). However, such a definition would lead to incorrect usage such as:

E1) *I had walked in the room and turned on the lights.

In this case, no native speaker would use the past perfect to describe these two sequential events which presumably (without further context) happened relatively shortly before the time of speech.

To account for the actual discourse functions of the past perfect in narrative prose, Riddle isolates certain semantic properties which characterize the meaning, either explicit or implied, of the tense. The first of these properties is a referential aspect. Citing Reichenbach, Riddle characterizes the past perfect not as describing two events in the past and related to the time of speech, but rather as describing an event in the past and related to a past reference point (cf. Huddleston 1984; Quirk, et al. 1985). Thus the sequence of actions in E2 is related as a whole to the time of speech rather than to a past reference point or one of the actions themselves.

E2) Over and over they rolled, scattering pot and pan, coffee and beans upon the clean swept floor, and fetched up with a bang against the far wall. There! But just as the Indian's thumbs sank into the deep muscular hollow below the Adam's apple, and his fingers slipped behind for a hold, there was a terrific explosion behind them. Both men lay as if stunned for an instant. Then the sheepherder, with a heave, broke loose and staggered to his feet. Martiniano raised to his knees (Waters, p. 146).

The second of the semantic properties Riddle attributes to the past perfect is a strong distal sense, i.e. "a stronger sense of looking back with a certain psychological distance than does the simple past" (p. 5). This distal sense does not necessarily imply that the action or event described happened in the distant past. Rather, it simply means that the past perfect is used to communicate actions or events which seem

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psychologically remote to the speaker/writer by virtue of their relation to yet another past event which is chronologically closer to the time of speech than the event expressed in the past perfect. Thus in E3, the lightening of the man's heart is related to the time of smiling rather than to the time of speech (the narration), imparting a distal sense to the former even though the two occurred in close chronological sequence. Also, the past perfect here makes it clear that the smiling happened after the lightening (see the discussion of out-of-sequence events below).

E3) Martiniano smiled in the darkness: in an instant his heart had become strangely, joyously light (Waters, p. 107).

The final semantic property of the past perfect is that it lends a sense of completeness to the action or event described. This sense of completeness is, explains Riddle, inherent in the past perfect and occurs in all instances of its use (p.7). In example E4, which describes a character's thoughts after an unsuccessful ceremony, we truly feel through the use of the past perfect that the ominous events of the day are complete and irreversible.

E4) The sun had set. Dusk and a chill night wind were blowing down the canyon. The visitors were going home. It had happened: the disgraceful, the unbelievable, the thing that had not happened for years (Waters, p. 154).

The fact that the past perfect is used here to describe the position of the sun is also a good illustration of the inherent sense of completeness of the tense. We are drawn a picture of a dark landscape because the sun is completely gone. Furthermore, if we were to replace the past perfect with the simple past tense "set," the focus would be on the action of the sun setting rather than on the resulting state of dusk. This supports Riddle's observation that the "choice

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of [the past perfect] focuses on the state resulting from an action rather than on the doing of the action per se" (p. 9) (see the discourse-level functions discussed below).

Finally, the third instance of the past perfect in E4 is another fine example of the distal sense associated with the tense; we get the feeling that the last occurrence of this "disgraceful thing" seems to the narrator or character to have occurred a long, long time ago, thus being totally inescapable. The discourse-level functions of the past perfect, as described by Riddle, are to relate events which are told out of chronological order, to give the reader background information (cf. Salkie 1989), and to focus on the state resulting from an action rather than on the action itself. 92% of the English past perfect occurrences located for the present study display the discourse function of backgrounding, confirming Riddle's claim that this is a very common feature of the tense. Examples E4 above, as well as E5, E6, and E7 below all employ the past perfect to relate out-of-sequence events.

E5) Around the time the story broke in Virginia, a parent in Minneapolis discovered that the same anthology had been altered as well as abridged (Wickendon, p. 77).

E6) The evidence always adduced for this theory is the Reagan Administration's invention of the term "revenue enhancement." I always assumed this was a joke produced by some wise guy at the Treasury who had to talk about getting more tax money in an era when the President had said he wouldn't let taxes rise (Baker, p. 68).

E7) Next morning when he awoke and looked outside, he saw that he had had a visitor. His corn, his beautiful new brave corn had been trampled (Waters, p. 181).

In E4, Martiniano's heart had lightened before he smiled; this is the reason he smiled. In E5, the altering and abridging of the anthology took place before the discovery and the breaking of the story, yet they are related in the text after these two other events. In E6, the President's

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statement about not letting taxes rise was uttered before the euphemism "revenue enhancement" was conceived of, but in the text, the two events are mentioned in the opposite order. Finally, the visitor in E7 had come and trampled before the person awoke, yet again they are related in the opposite order.

E8 and E9 are good illustrations of the tense being used to present background information. Both of the events related in the past perfect occurred prior to the beginning of the narrative, and knowledge of these events help the reader better understand the actions, emotions, etc. of the characters in the narrative.

E8) A few years back he had married a gentle young Spanish-American who looked like his daughter: Angelina. Between them they had another. Byers named the girl baby Chipeta...(Waters, p. 36).

E9) There was the same-toned gray, the marking of black, and the little splotch of white under the left shoulder, down toward the belly.
It was the deer he had killed (Waters, p.105).

The reason E8 is not written exclusively in the past perfect is that although the whole passage acts as backgrounding for the narrative at hand, the single action told in the past perfect is backgrounding for the subsequent events in the passage. In other words, the author is relating the marriage to another past event rather than to the time of speech in order to give the reader a clearer sense of the order of actual events, how they relate to each other and to the time of speech (narrative).

With these observations on the semantic and discourse-level properties of the English past perfect in mind, let us now move on to the German past perfect to compare its semantic properties and discourse functions to those of the English.

4. The German past perfect tense in GFL textbooks

Grammar textbooks for English-speaking GFL learners usually have little to say about the German past perfect, or pluperfect, other than how it is formed. This formation, along with the tense's semantic and discourse functions (as we will see), is similar to the English past perfect. While textbooks mention these similarities often, they are rarely exploited as teaching or learning tools.

As far as usage is concerned, the textbooks for English-speaking GFL learners which were surveyed for this study were quite fond of claiming simply that "[t]he pluperfect corresponds closely in meaning and use to the English past perfect" (Borgert 1976, p. 137; cf. Deutsch 2000 1976; Zorach 1980; Fox 1990). This explanation might suffice for native English speakers, but, as Riddle demonstrates, most GFL learners who have had prior EFL experience will probably need a more precise explanation.[2]

None of the GFL textbooks for Japanese learners surveyed mentioned that the German past perfect is similar to the English in function or (less so) in structure. Consequently, example sentences were translated into Japanese, a language with no equivalent tense. Furthermore, the past perfect's usage and functions were, once again, insufficiently described as simply expressing something which happened before a specified past point (Troll & Komatsu 1993; Fukuda 1987).[3] A more thorough analysis and explanation of the tense is needed.

5. Text analysis of the German past perfect tense

Nearly all of the occurrences of the German past perfect

found in the present study were used to relate either out-of-sequence events or backgrounding information. Yet one is hard-pressed to find mention, much less illustrations, of these discourse-level functions in GFL textbooks for either Japanese- or English-speaking GFL learners. In G2, G3, G4, and G5, we have five prime examples of the German past perfect used to express out-of-sequence events.

G2) Er sparte richtig für uns. Er hatte eine alte Konservenbüchse, in die er alles, was man ihm am Tag zu essen gegeben hatte, hinein (Schnurre, p.2).
(He saved well for us. He had an old tin can in which he put everything which had been given him throughout the day.)

G3) Eines Tages fiel es Carlo auf, dass Geronimo vollkommen aufgehört hatte, von seinem Unglück zu reden. Bald wusste er warum: der Blinde war zur Einsicht eingekommen, dass er nie den Himmel, die Hügel, die Strassen, die Menschen, das Licht wieder sehen würde (Schnitzler, p. 300).
(One day it occurred to Carlo that Geronimo had completely stopped talking about his accident. Soon he knew why: The blind boy had come to the realization that he would never again see the sky, the hills, the streets, the people, the light.)

G4) Die Ernte missriet ein Jahr nach dem anderen; um eine kleine Geldsumme, die der Alte erspart hatte, wurde er von einem Verwandten betrogen; und als er an einem schwülen Augusttag auf freiem Felde vom Schlag getroffen hinsank und starb, hinterliesser nichts als Schulden (Schnitzler, p. 300).
(The crops failed one year after another; a relative swindled the old man out of a small sum that he had saved; and when he fell down in an open field on a sultry August day and died of a stroke, he left nothing but debts.)

G5) Im Laufe zweier trubseliger Jahre bildete sich in Zimpren zwar wieder eine Gemeinde, eine kleine nur, denn die kluge Flora Klipp hatte, als der Grundstuckpreis endlich auf ein Zehntel seines ursprunglichen Wertes gefallen war, fast ganz Zimpren aufgekauft, nachdem der Boden von Altenwaren- und Schrotthandlern grundlich gesaubert worden war; doch auch Frau Klipps Spekulation erweis sich als voreilig, da es ihr nicht gelang, ausreichened Personal zur Bewirtsschaftung des Bodens nach Zimpren to locken (Boll, p. 440).
(In the course of two gloomy years a community once more developed in Zimpren, but only a small one, for clever Flora Klipp had bought up almost the whole of Zimpren after the price of real estate had fallen to a tenth of its original value and when the ground had been thoroughly cleansed by secondhand goods and scrapmetal dealers. But her speculations, too, turned out to be premature, since she did not succeed in luring enough personnel to Zimpren to farm the land.)

In G the topic of the passage is a gibbon who saved his food for a poor family. Mentioned first in the passage is that he saved his food; mentioned second is that the food had been given to him throughout the day. Of course the former action would in real time require that the latter happen first, opposite of how they are related in the narrative. In G3 Carlo's realization took place some time after Geronimo had ceased talking about his accident. Likewise, Geronimo's realization happened prior to the cessation. These three events are related in the passage in just the opposite order,

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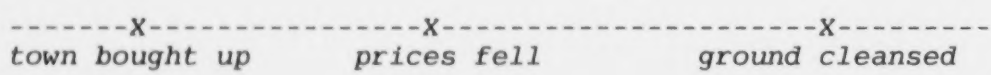
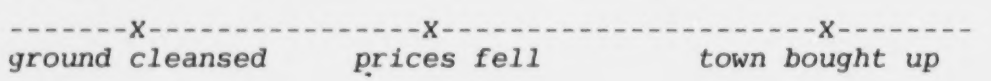
thus requiring the past perfect to help the reader sort out their occurrences in real time. In G4 it is clear that the saving of the money had to have taken place before the swindling. Finally in G5 a number of events are related out of sequence. Thus order is made even more jumbled by the common practice in German of splitting up the two components of the past perfect construction. The order of these vents as they really happened compared to how they occur in the narrative can best be illustrated with comparative time-lines:

Narrative order



Chronological order



About equally as often, the German past perfect was used to give backgrounding information, i.e. information about the characters, plot, setting, etc., which had come to pass either prior to the start of the narration or "off stage" and affected the current state of events. G6-10 below are illustrations of this discourse-level function.

G6) Uns ging es gerade wieder ein bisschen besser an dem Tag: wir hatten zwei Mark mit Teppichklopfen verdient und dem Gibbon eine Banane gekauft (Schnurre, p.3).
(That day things were going a bit better for us: we had earned two marks beating carpets and had bought the gibbon a banana.)

G7) Er musste, wie immer beim Anblick solcher Kinder, daran denken, dass Geronimo gerade so alt gewesen war, als das Unglück geschah, durch das er das Augenlicht verloren hatte (Schnitzler, p. 296).
(As always when he saw such children, he had to think that Geronimo had been the same age when the accident happened, through which he had lost his eyesight.)

G8) Es war Pietro Tenelli; erst im Mai waren die beiden Bettler im Wirtshaus des Raggazzi in Mirgonone mit ihm zusammen gesessen, und er hatte ihnen eine schauerliche Geschichte erzählt, wie er von einem Strolch einmal beinahe erdolcht worden war (Schnitzler, p. 338).
(It was Pietro Tenelli. Only last month the two beggars had sat beside him in Raggazzi's inn in Mirgonone, and he had told them a gruesome story of how he had once almost been stabbed by a tramp.)

G9) Doch das war anders gewesen. Damals war er der Mann noch, eine Sache mit glücklicher Hand zu packen und sich den Sieg daraus zu gestalten. Skrupel und Kämpfe? O ja. Und krank war er gewesen, wohl kranker als jetzt, ein Darbender, Fluchtiger, mit der Welt Zerfallener, gedruckt und im Menschlichen bettelarm. Aber jung, ganz jung noch! Jedesmal, wie tief auch gebeugt, war sein Geist

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geschmeidig emporgeschnellt, und nach den Stunden des Harms waren die anderen des Glaubens und des inneren Triumphes gekommen (Mann, p. 368).

(But that had been different. At that time he had still been the man to take hold of a thing with a lucky hand and shape it into victory. Scruples and struggles? Oh yes. And he had been ill, certainly sicker than now, a starving man, a refugee, at odds with the world, oppressed and a beggar in his human sympathy. But young, still quite young! Each time his spirit had bobbed up nimbly, however deeply bent; and after hours of grief, those others of faith and inner triumph had come.)

G10) Man scheute nicht davor zurück, Goswin zu verhaften, zu verhören, und obwohl man ihn mangels Beweises freisprechten musste, so wurde doch eine Einzelheit aus seinem vorleben bekanntgegeben, die manches Kopfshutteln verursachte: Er hatte in seiner Jugend zwei Jahre in einem Häuserblock gewohnt, in dem auch ein kommunistischer Strassenbahner gewohnt hatte. Nicht einmal die gute Flora Klipp wurde von Misstrauen verschont; es fand eine Haussuchung bei ihr statt, doch wurde nichts Belastendes gefunden ausser einem roten Strumpfband, für dessen Existenz Flora Klipp einen Grund angab, der die Kommission nicht ganz überzeugte: sie sagte, sie habe in ihrer Jugend eben gern rote Strumpfbänder getragen (Boll, p. 438).

(They did not shrink from arresting Goswin and interrogating him; and although he had to be released for lack of evidence, one detail from his former life was nevertheless made public, causing much headshaking: in his youth he had lived for two years in a tenement in which a Communist streetcar worker had lived too. Not even the good Flora Klipp was spared the ordeal of mistrust. Her house was searched but nothing incriminating was found except for a red garter, for the existence of which Flora Klipp gave a reason that did not quite convince the commission: she said that in her youth she had simply liked to wear red garters.)

In G6 and G7 we see two slightly different backgrounding functions. G6 provides the reader with backgrounding information not about the whole story, but rather to set the stage for the characters' actions in the new scene. This sort of backgrounding is rarer than the kind in G7, where background information for the entire story is given. G8 is like G7 in that the events related as background information happened prior to the beginning of the story; however, the purpose here is to introduce a new character into the story. The form habe getragen 'had worn' in G10 is indirect or reported speech in the past perfect, but the form change does not affect the backgrounding function of the tense in the passage.

Very few of the instances of the German past perfect analyzed for this study fail to fit neatly into either of the two functions of relating out-of-sequence events or backgrounding. G11-15 below are five passages in which the tense's third discourse-level function (a focus on the state resulting from an action) and the tense's inherent sense of completeness determine its use, as opposed to the simple past.

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G11) Das Abendrot mischete sich langsam mit Grau. Man horte die S-bahn vom Hochbahnhof rüber und the Seehunde jauchzen; ein Pfau krieschte fern, und auf der Marmorbuste des ersten Direktors sass eine Amsel mit einem sich krummenden Regenwurm in Schnabel. Es roch nach Früling, nach Raubtier und nach Benzin; die Luft war wie als gläsernem Spinnweb gesponnen.

Der Gibbon hatte seine Arbeit jetzt unterbrochen, er stand freihänding, die Arme Ausgebreitet wie zogernde Flügel, auf seinem waagrechten Ast und hatte die flache Nase witternd zum Zenit aufgehoben (Schnurre, p. 4).

(The evening's red mixed itself slowly with gray. You could hear the streetcar from the central station and the seals cheering; a peacock screeched in the distance, and on the marble bust of the first director sat a blackbird with a writhing earthworm in its beak. It smelled of spring, of predators and of gasoline; the air was as if spun from glass spiderweb.

The gibbon had now interrupted his work. He stood empty-handed, his arms spread out like hesitating wings, on his horizontal branch and had lifted his nose to sniff the scent.)

G12) Jetzt hatte sich das Wildschwein wieder gefasst, es gurgulte eine Beschimpfung und raste mit gesenktem Schädel auf Vater zu (Schnurre, p. 5).

(Now the wild pig had gotten a hold of himself again. It gurgled a curse and raced at Father with its head lowered.)

G13) Carlo begrifft nicht, was geschehen war. War Geronimo plötzlich verrückt geworden (Schnitzler, p. 308)?

(Carlo didn't understand what had happened. Had Geronimo suddenly gone crazy?)

G14) Und kaum war die Truppe im Hof verschwunden, schein sie gleich die Pferde gewendet zu haben und war auf dem Wege zu uns (Kafka, p. 402).

(And hardly had the troops in the courtyard disappeared when they seemed to have turned the horses around and were on their way toward us.)

G15) Aber als ich die Schwelle der Stube Überschritten hatte, sagte der Richter, der vorgesprungen war und mich schon erwartete: "Dieser Mann tut mir leid" (Kafka, p. 404).

(But when I had crossed the threshold of the living room, the judge, who had hastened ahead and was already waiting for me, said: "I feel sorry for this man.")

G11-13 are passages in which the focus of the narration is on the resulting state of various actions. Had the past tense been used instead, the focus would have been placed on the actions, creating a very different effect. In G11 the narrator focuses on the motionless gibbon standing in such a unique position. (The second past perfect is used to relate out-of-order events.) In G12 the focus is on the wild boar; it has righted itself, the process of which is not important. What is important is its state of readiness to attack the father. And in G13 the focus is on the state resulting from Geronimo's bizarre behavior, namely the confusion of Carlo, and the state of insanity that Carlo fears his brother to be in.

G14-15 illustrate the inherent sense of completeness of the German (and English) past perfect, which makes it clear to the reader that the troops in G14 first completely disappear, giving the narrator a brief sense of relief, before turning

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around. More strikingly, the same semantic property is exploited in the first occurrence of the tense in G15 to make it clear to the reader that the narrator has completely crossed the threshold and that there is, and can be, no going back. (The tense is used the second time in G15 to relate out-of-sequence events.)

6. Summary and suggestions for teaching[4]

This text analysis has demonstrated that the past perfect tense in English and German have equivalent semantic properties and discourse-level functions. These are:

Semantic properties:

* a referential aspect, relating two events which occurred prior to the narrative to one another rather than to the time of speech (narration)

* a strong distal sense, a sense of "looking back with psychological distance"

* a sense of completeness

Discourse-level functions:

* to relate out-of-sequence events

* to provide background information

* a focus on the state resulting from a given action(s) rather than on the action(s) itself

However, it has also been shown that the past perfect of both English and German are inadequately described in terms of the above features in English EFL, English GFL and Japanese GFL textbooks. This leaves both English and Japanese GFL learners with an incomplete understanding of the German past perfect tense. Therefore it is suggested that Japanese GFL learners be allowed to use their prior knowledge of English to

help them better understand the German past perfect. Furthermore, it is recommended that text analysis of German texts be a primary tool in the learning process.

Concrete teaching suggestions can be made based on these findings. The first is that English translations of German sentences having parallel and equivalent structures (as determined through text analysis) should be included in Japanese GFL texts. Thus students would be able to utilize their prior linguistic knowledge of English in understanding and learning German. Even if the GFL teacher does not want to draw students' attention to these English translations, the English would nevertheless be there for Japanese students who might find it useful. The second is that explicit explanations of the German past perfect (and any other grammatical structure) should include in more detail its semantic properties and discourse-level functions. This is especially important for those students who plan to themselves become GFL teachers. The third is that authentic, contextualized texts should be used more often in textbooks and classroom presentations, allowing learners to hypothesize rules and then test those rules against other texts.

Notes

1. This is, of course, not true for all features of any two given related languages. Watzinger-Tharp (1994) has found that the functions of the simple past and present perfect tenses are not equivalent in German and English.

2. Native English speakers may require a better description of the German past perfect too, as it is unlikely that they have devoted much conscious analysis of the functions of the English tense. I for one was not at all satisfied with the explanation that the German past perfect was like the English, and I was not comfortable with the German tense for many years, until I began formally studying English grammar.

3. I extend my gratitude to K. Kuwada for assisting me in this analysis of Japanese GFL textbooks.

4. I wish to thank the audience who attended my presentation of this paper at the Southwest Regional JALT Conference, Kitakyushu, Japan, May 14, 1995. Their questions and comments, based on years of teaching GFL in Japan and Korea, led me to revise this section somewhat. While I still believe that the approach described above will theoretically be beneficial for Japanese GFL learners, I must also concede that in practice it may not be the best approach for all teachers of all students at all levels. However, a teaching methodology based on text analysis and previous experience with related languages may be used in tandem with other methodologies, providing learners with yet another path "into" the target language.

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